

Synchrony Champions Corner

What is a Champion? One definition is a person who fights or speaks openly in support of a cause or belief. For this edition of In Sync, we found just that in Natalie Johnson, SLP at ManorCare Prestwick in Avon, IN. Natalie speaks very openly and passionately about her experience with Synchrony Dysphagia Solutions by ACP™. Her facility started using the system in January of 2016. Natalie shared that prior to that time, she felt that her role was more about managing the dysphagia in her facility, not treating it. She says, "Synchrony has completely changed how I help people." Natalie has worked 5 years in long term care, helping people with dysphagia. She felt that the use of swallowing exercises was very hampered by the fact that her patients couldn't tell what they were doing or had cognitive impairments that prevented them from following exercise instructions. Now, with sEMG-guided exercise, she's excited that the patients are engaged and she's actually able to provide them with much more effective effortful swallows and Mendelsohn Maneuvers.



Natalie Johnson, SLP at ManorCare Prestwick

She uses her Synchrony system (sEMG and/or PENS) virtually every day with her patients. She describes the system as able to "take away some of the old barriers and provide new access to improvement" for patients. She notes that the higher-level patients are motivated by the ability to see more objectively the improvements they were making. Furthermore, patients with moderate cognitive impairment are also aided by the visual feedback. She advocates trying it on those patients and stresses that sometimes it takes several sessions for them to catch on – "Don't try it just once." Regarding use of Synchrony sEMG, Natalie says there is a bit of a learning curve but that she's "fast" now in terms of her ability to navigate the system. She often applies PENS to patients while she's readying the sEMG system. Overall Natalie wants to share her enthusiasm with others, especially SLPs new to the Synchrony system and treatment principles. "I love it. I'm so happy that we have it".

Thanks to Natalie for sharing her insights and her desire to encourage colleagues to move past just managing dysphagia and instead, focus on treating it!